

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

LOS ALAMOS SCIENTIFIC LABORATORY
 (CONTRACT W-7405-ENG-36)
 P. O. Box 1663
 LOS ALAMOS, NEW MEXICO

IN REPLY
 REFER TO: N-2-1181

February 20, 1959

Mr. Hobart Ellis
 NUCLEONICS
 330 West 42nd Street
 New York 36, New York

Dear Hobart,

Here are the answers to your questions about our accident report.

1. The tank in which the accident occurred was not bolted to the floor. Tangential shift of one of the supporting legs was apparent because the initial position of the foot was outlined by the latest coat of floor paint. Apparently the tank pivoted about the opposite foot.
2. Though we cannot be certain that there was no following low-order burst when the stirrer was turned on the second time, it seems unlikely. No accompanying blue-flash was reported, and it is doubtful that the few seconds presumed to have elapsed while the stirrer was off would have been sufficient for re-establishment of a potentially-critical situation. (Traces of radiation detectors were consistent with the single-burst hypothesis, but do not exclude the possibility of two closely-spaced pulses.) The stirrer "rumbles" when turned on under normal conditions - it seems that degree of rumble could easily have been misjudged. We will never know for sure.
3. If you refer to Fig. 2, the operator at the accident site (Tank F) ran out the door near tank D, where he was joined by the second operator who had been near tank K, and the third operator who had been near the purification area (both passed by tank F). All three then returned past tank F and through room 213 to lead man No. 1 to a shower. It is this last passage to which "returning" refers.

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Mr. Hobart Ellis

February 20, 1959

A few modifications are suggested on the attached copies of Editors' Note and Figure Captions.

Please thank Dan Cooper for the interesting account of the Yugoslav reactor accident.

Best wishes,

Original Signed by
H. C. Paxton

Hugh C. Paxton

HCP:mct

Enclosure:

One sheet - Editors' Note,
and one sheet - fig. captions.

CC: John Savage, no encl. 
Mail and Records (2), no encl.
H. C. Paxton file.

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